

Special Session of International Research Collaboration
held at the 2002 MRS Fall Meeting
Prof. Alex H. King, Purdue University
NSF Grant DMR-0242287

- This special session was designed to encourage closer collaborations among MRS members worldwide and to provide information about collaborative research programs run jointly by funding organizations from different parts of the world. Tom Weber, Director, DMR/NSF described criteria to obtain funding. He stated there is a “value-added” component when proposals include international cooperation. He described NSF-sponsored int’l workshops on materials for which the goal is to enhance collaboration in research, education, and technology. He Minghong of the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) highlighted the priorities in materials science within the agency’s five-year plan. He said the major plan focuses on photonic and electronic functional materials and on nanoscience and technology. Guillermo Solozano of Pontificia Univ iv Catolica, Rio de Janeiro in Brazil covered Brazilian programs for international
- collaboration funded at the federal and state levels. The federal agency CNPq supports bilateral agreements with countries from South America, Europe, and Asia, and shares support for multilateral agreements with two other federal divisions, CAPES and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. CIAM is a program specifically on inter-American collaboration on materials. From the European Commission, Ezio Andreta summarized the Sixth Framework Programme of the European Union, stating that anyone in the world can apply to such programs. Koichi Kitazawa, newly in the position of vice president of the Japan Science and Technology Corp., cited opportunities for exchange of researchers, bilateral and regional meetings, and collaborative research programs.
- When audience participants expressed interest in concrete examples of how such programs can work, the panelists acknowledged the difficulties in aligning programs, but suggested the best way to move the programs forward is to find a counterpart in another country, and then drive the process ahead.

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- The MRS Fall Meeting was an ideal venue for this activity since it attracted approximately 4500 active researchers in the field of materials science with approximately 35% coming from outside the US. A number of additional international activities occurred at the meeting and synergized the activity. Those include:
 1. A meeting of the General Assembly on the International Union of Materials Research Societies
 2. A follow-up meeting of the NSF-RFBR gathering that took place in Moscow in June 2002
 3. Bi-lateral meetings between MRS and E-MRS (European Materials Research Society) leadership
 4. An EC-NSF workshop on collaborative projects
 5. Regularly scheduled presentations by several US federal funding agencies that have been an important part of MRS meetings for several years.
- These activities ensured the presence of several high-level individuals who took an active part in the session.